

Symons Elementary School Family Handbook



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The community elects members of the Milan Board of Education. Individuals do not need to be parents to serve on the Board. There is an election every two years; terms are staggered so that Board members serve for four years.

The Board of Education is responsible for decisions that impact the entire district. They decide when and where to build new facilities, provide course materials and other services, hire the superintendent, manage all school funds and property, set rules and regulations for school property management, transact business for the district, establish qualifications for employees, set rules for student conduct, and deal with programs and facilities that affect students district wide.

The Central Administrative Office



Bryan Girbach

Superintendent



Ryan McMahon

Assistant Superintendent

Superintendent Bryan Girbach is the executive officer of the Milan Board of Education. Mr. Girbach and his staff operate from the school's district office, which is located in the Milan High School Administrative Offices. They work to keep the school district running smoothly, including everything from paying the staff to implementing the directives of the Michigan Department of Education and the Federal Government.

Vision – Mission Statement – Guiding Principles

Vision: Milan Area Schools: Founded on Tradition – Focused on Excellence

Mission: Milan Area Schools is a community committed to achieving academic excellence for all learners through research, collaboration and continuous improvement.

Symons Elementary School Guiding Principles

- Symons is a community that fosters mutual respect and trust, a school where every person is valued. Symons emphasizes the joy of learning with the exchange of thoughts and ideas in a safe, orderly and caring environment.
- Symons' curriculum is guided by high expectations for all students and derived from the essential skills and concepts necessary for full participation in a democratic society. The curriculum is rigorous, defined sequentially from grade to grade and implemented consistently by all teachers.
- Instructional practices at Symons are designed to help each student become a successful learner. Teachers meet this goal by supporting every student in assuming responsibility for his/her own learning and employing a wide variety of instructional strategies.
- Assessments are used to measure, monitor and communicate each student's progress toward mastery of essential skills and concepts. Learning expectations are clear to both students and parents and progress is reported in an appropriate, honest and timely manner. Teachers at Symons use a wide variety of assessments to shape instruction and to meet the needs of individual students.

Parents wishing to pick up a student early must do so by signing their child out in the office. Students picked up prior to 2:50pm will be marked as ½ day absent. Students will only be released to people listed on the registration form. Adults **will** be asked to show identification. **Please make sure you have ID with you.**

Student Attendance

State Law requires that all students of school age shall be in school during the school year and that this is the responsibility of the parents. If a student is ill or must be absent from school, the parents must notify the school and leave a message before 9:00 am.

Absences

Good attendance is crucial to a good education. All children need to attend school on a regular basis. A parent must excuse any child who is absent. This can be done by calling the school office.

Please Note:

- Students arriving after 9:15 will be marked tardy.
- Students arriving after 10:05 will be marked half-day absent.
- Students leaving prior 2:50 will be marked half-day absent (prior to 11:05 on half-days).

Habitual Attendance Problems

After eight absences, a letter will be sent to the parent(s) notifying them of attendance laws. After the 12th absence a meeting will be scheduled with the principal. After twenty absences the county truancy officer will be contacted for further action. Parents are expected to make sure that their children attend school **regularly and on time.**

School Security

Building Security

All building doors, including those at the main entrance are locked. Please use the buzzer at the main entrance and sign in and out at the office when visiting Symons Elementary School. **Please understand that for the students' safety we are required to ask for photo identification.**



Picking Up Children

Parents who need to pick up a child from school during the instructional day must come to the office and sign their child out. Children will be called to the office when you arrive. **Photo identification is required when signing a child out.**

Student Pick-Up Authorization

If you would like a friend or relative to sometimes pick up your child, their name must be on the registration form that you completed at the start of school. You can update the form by coming to the main office at Symons. In case of an emergency, you may also call or send a note to the office listing the full name of the person picking up your child. Please sign and date the note. **YOUR CHILD WILL BE RELEASED ONLY TO THOSE ADULTS LISTED ON THE FORM.** Please notify those you have authorized that they will need to show a photo ID when picking up your child.

Criminal Background Checks Required for Volunteers and Chaperones

ICHAT – For the safety of our students, all adult volunteers and chaperones affiliated with Symons Elementary School must undergo an annual background check before volunteering, chaperoning or being in the building. This check is good for all 4 schools. The background check that is required by Milan Area Schools is the Internet Criminal History Access Tool (ICHAT), the sex offender registry list and the offender tracking information system and is provided by the Michigan State Police. In order to ensure that you are cleared to volunteer, chaperone or be in our school please make sure that you complete the following steps at least one week before you are scheduled to volunteer or chaperone:

1. At registration for your student, provide photo ID and fill out the ICHAT background check form.
2. Stop in the Symons Elementary office and request an ICHAT background check form.
3. Fill out the form while in the office and sign the form in the presence of a Symons Elementary staff member.
4. Provide photo identification such as a driver's license so that the Milan Area Schools may make a photocopy.

School Visitors

*All visitors to Symons Elementary School must sign in at the office with **photo identification**.* For the safety of our students, all visitors, including volunteers, are asked to sign in upon entering the building and sign out upon leaving. Visitors will be given a badge to wear while in the building.

Tornado and Lock Down Drills

Fire, tornado and lock down drills are held regularly throughout the school year to instruct the children with the most effective and safest way to handle emergencies. In the event of a real emergency, please understand that our staff will strictly follow emergency procedures to keep children as safe as possible. In the event of a real lock down, children will not be released from school until it has been established by the proper authorities that the surrounding areas are safe.

School Dress

Dress and Grooming

Children who come to school appropriately dressed and well groomed are more motivated to learn and are better behaved. Symons Elementary School students are expected to come to school in clean and comfortable clothing appropriate for the classroom. Good health habits and neat appearance help create a healthy classroom environment.



- Hats and other head coverings should be removed during the school day.
- NO WHEELIES are allowed on shoes.
- Please consider the “two finger rule” for tank tops: straps should be at least the width of two fingers.
- Please consider the “fingertip rule” for shorts and skirts. These items should be no shorter than a child’s fingertips when arms are extended down their sides.
- Please review any sayings on your child’s clothing before sending him/her to school. Those that are disrespectful or contain inappropriate language should not be worn to school.
- Please help your child consider the weather when choosing clothes for the day. Layers are often a good choice.

Dress for Safety – Certain clothing items have caused some children injuries. Cords hanging from hoods on jackets and “flip-flop” type sandals can make playing hazardous. For your child’s safety **Flip Flops** are a hazard and **not allowed**. Please have your student bring tennis shoes to wear on the playground and in PE class if they wear sandals (not flip flops) to school.

Cancellations and Delay of School



Please do NOT call the school for cancellation information.

If, for any reason, school is cancelled, the announcement will be made on radio stations. WJR (7600 AM), and WWJ (950 AM). Announcements will also be made on Television Stations Channel 2 WJBK-FOX, Channel 4 WDIV, and Channel 7 WXYZ-TV. Information is available at www.milanareaschools.org and the School Messenger System. School delays will be for the amount of time announced and will affect **all** students.

Our lines are often busy, so we encourage you to listen to one or more radio stations for information, particularly on foggy, icy, or snowy mornings. As we all know, the weather can change on a dime.

Some days the bad weather gives us plenty of notice and on other days it arrives just as our buses are beginning their runs. Please know our first concern is the safety of the children.

School Cafeteria Information



Breakfast and lunch are served daily to students at Symons Elementary School. Milk is available to students who bring their lunch from home. Breakfast costs \$1.00 and lunch costs \$2.50 for hot lunch and \$2.75 for the sandwich bar. A carton of milk costs \$0.50. Free and reduced price meals are available to children who qualify. Applications are available in the principal's office, or you can apply online at www.lunchapp.com. Menus are distributed monthly for children to take home.

Breakfast/Lunch Debit Accounts

Breakfast and lunch sales are computerized at Symons Elementary School. Each student is given his/her own debit account. Parents deposit money in the account and each time the student purchases a meal or buys milk, his/her account is debited. Each student is given an account number (this is the child's student number). The cashier enters the student's account number and the student's account is charged for the meal.

Deposits

To add money to your child's account, please put the deposit in a **sealed** envelope with your **child's name** and **room number** on it and return it to your child's classroom. We encourage parents to make weekly or monthly deposits. The cafeteria will not be responsible for lost cash, so a **check is preferred**. Checks should be made out to **Milan Area Schools Lunch Program**.

Free and Reduced Price Lunches

Free and reduced price meals are available to children who qualify. Applications are available in the principal's office. If a student qualifies for free or reduced price meals, the computer recognizes this when his/her card is scanned. There is no identification of students receiving free or reduced price meals. Students approved for free lunch are also eligible for free breakfast. Students approved for reduced price meals pay \$.30 for breakfast and \$.40 for lunch.

Symons Nutrition Program

Symons believes in teaching our young children healthy eating habits that can become lifelong habits. We will be talking about healthy eating in the lunchroom all year, and teachers stress healthy eating in classrooms as well. Thank you for supporting our efforts at home.

Lunchroom Rules

1. Please remain in your seat while eating.
2. Speak quietly while in the lunchroom.
3. Do not share your lunch or eat food outside of the lunchroom.
4. Remember to clean up after yourself. Don't leave anything on the table or benches.
5. Breakfast and lunch are important meals! Eat a healthy meal and don't waste food.
6. Use your best table manners and respect other students.



7. Pack your lunch bag with healthy food and drinks.

SYMONS HAS A “NO POP” POLICY!

Please do not send pop to school with your child. Pop will be sent home. We encourage students to help parents pack a lunch with the healthy choices we will talk about in the lunchroom all year.

Classroom Snacks

If your child’s teacher allows you to send in a snack, please be sure to send in a healthy snack. Your child’s teacher will give you suggestions of what is allowed.

Classroom Treats

Children enjoy celebrating birthdays and bringing in a treat for the class or class party. We would appreciate it if you and your child plan something special that involves healthy treat.

Personal Communication Devices

Possession and/or use of a personal communication device (PCD) by a student while at school is a privilege that may be forfeited by any student who fails to follow these guidelines. PCDs include computers, tablets, e-readers, cell phones, and iPods (and other similar devices). Unless approved by the teacher, PCD devices must be kept in student lockers during all instructional time. Students are permitted to use their PCD during their lunch period after they have eaten their lunch and with approval by the cafeteria staff. The school assumes no responsibility for theft, loss, damage to, or misuse or unauthorized use of PCDs brought onto its property. Students and parents are strongly encouraged to take appropriate precautions to make sure the devices are not left unattended or unsecured. Failure to follow these guidelines may result in loss of this privilege, additional disciplinary action, and confiscation of the PCD (to be returned to the parent or guardian only).

Taking the Bus

Any child living 1 mile or more from Symons Elementary School may take the bus to school. Bus routes start at 7:35 a.m. and bring all children to school by 8:50 a.m.

- To find out the time and location of your child's bus stop, please call the Transportation Manager, Cheryl Mayher, at 439-5900. Bus routes change every year to accommodate new students.
- Students must ride the bus to which they are assigned unless parents make specific arrangements with the transportation department (439-5900) and notify the teacher and office of any change.
- By your request, **in emergency situations only**, your child can get off the bus at a different bus stop or ride a different bus. You must call the Transportation Department first at 439-5900.
- For your child's safety, a parent or guardian must be present when he/she arrives home by bus. If the bus driver cannot locate a parent or guardian, he/she will bring the child back to Symons' After School Child Care Program. There will be a charge for this service.

School Bus Safety Procedures



The right of a student to ride school buses is contingent upon good behavior and observance of rules and regulations. Students who violate the rules will be subject to disciplinary action at the discretion of the bus driver. Students shall obey the directions of the driver promptly and courteously. Students will occupy the seat designated for them by the driver.

The first responsibility of bus drivers is the safe transportation of passengers. If any student(s) behavior endangers the safety of others, the driver will issue misconduct reports. These reports can result in bus suspension.

Every student who rides the bus will receive a list of rules as well as contact information. All students will be expected to sign a contract stating they will abide by the bus rules.

Students shall observe the following bus rules:

- Walk on the left side of the road, facing traffic, and stand 20 feet off the roadway while walking.
- If you must cross the street, wait for the bus to stop completely and turn on the flashing red lights. Wait for the driver to signal that it is safe to cross. Look both ways, and then walk around the front of the bus to get on.
- Wipe your feet before entering the bus.
- Do not throw waste paper or rubbish on the floor.
- Do not mark or deface the bus.
- Do not eat on the bus.
- Avoid unnecessary conversation with the driver.
- Keep arms and head in the bus at all times.
- Report any damage to the bus driver.

- Never bring glass objects on the bus.
- Carry all food and beverages in a closed lunch box or bag.
- Never bring animals, including reptiles and rodents, on the bus.
- Do not bring medicine on the bus.
- No balloons or other items that might block the driver's view.
- Scuffling or fighting on the bus is cause for disciplinary action.
- Obey the school bus driver at all times.

Health and Wellness

The school nurse, Judee Gniewek, is available to discuss health concerns and answer student/parent questions. Please contact her at 734-439-5858 or email gniewekj@milanareaschools.org. Duties of the nurse include follow up on health concerns and medication, individual counseling regarding health concerns, co facilitating groups and teaching classes related to health. Please contact the school nurse if your child has a health condition that requires an emergency plan to be in place for his/her care and treatment. Examples of such conditions include: insulin dependent diabetes, seizure disorders, severe asthma, anaphylactic reactions to foods or insect stings, etc. The nurse is on call for medical concerns/injuries such as asthma attacks, sprains, strains, etc. In the event of a serious emergency, 911 is called. Parents are always contacted in the event of an emergency.

When to Keep a Sick Child Home

Children are most successful in school when they are present for as many days as possible. However, children who are sick need to stay home if they will not be able to concentrate sufficiently on learning or if they may cause others to become sick. To help reduce the spread of illness to students and staff, please keep your child home for the following reasons:

1. Fever: Your child should be fever free (without being medicated) for 24 hours before returning to school. We will call home if your students temp is 100* or higher.
2. Rash: Check with a doctor before bringing a child to school with a rash.
3. Vomiting: A child may return to school after s/he has not thrown up for 24 hours and is back on a regular diet.
4. Diarrhea: A child who has a loose stool more than two times in 24 hours, should stay home. S/he may return to school after being diarrhea free for 24 hours.
5. Cough/Cold: A child with a severe or frequent cough and a runny nose is likely not to feel well enough to concentrate sufficiently on learning. S/he would benefit from more rest and fluids at home.
6. Doctor Recommendation: If a child has been prescribed an antibiotic, check with the doctor to see if the child needs to be on medication 24 hours prior to returning to school.

Health and Medical Limitations

A letter from a doctor must be submitted to the school office requesting a change in a student's program at school if a student cannot participate in a physical activity because of health or physical limitations. A letter from a doctor must also be on file if a child needs to stay inside the school building during recess.

Medication Administration

Whenever possible, medications should be given at home either before or after school hours. We understand that there are times when it is necessary for students to take medication at school.

Medications – prescription and non-prescription – require a medication permission form to be filled out before medication can be administered at the school. Medication permission forms are available in the main office.

Important information regarding medications:

- All medication must be brought to school by a parent/guardian in the original container and stored in the school office
- Students are allowed to carry and self-administer certain medications at school, such as inhalers, epi-pens and insulin. Written permission from the parent/guardian and physician is required
- Medication cannot be stored in the school office over the summer months. A parent/guardian must pick up the medication at the end of the school year. Medications not picked up will be disposed of according to Washtenaw County Waste procedures

Head Lice

Head lice are a frustrating nuisance. Please check your child's hair regularly to prevent head lice from becoming a problem. Milan Area Schools has a NO live bug policy. If your child is found to have LIVE head lice you will be asked to come and pick up your child from school. If your child is found to have nits (eggs) you will be notified and you will need to treat their hair and remove the nits. Students who have had live lice will not be allowed to return to school until checked by school personnel and found to have a decreasing number of nits (eggs) and no live lice.

Recess



Recess is held outdoors when the weather permits. As a general rule, we feel that if students are well enough to be in school, then they are well enough to go outside for recess. Requests for indoor recess must be accompanied by a physician's statement. Recess is held inside when temperatures drop below 10 degrees Fahrenheit (including wind chill).

During recess, the children are always supervised by teachers and playground supervisors. The supervisors' relationship with the children is the same as a teacher's. The students are expected to be cooperative with and obey the supervisors.

Playground Rules

1. **Wear the right clothes for the weather!**
2. Be courteous and respect others. Don't interrupt other children's games.

3. Only safe play is allowed. That means no throwing snowballs, sticks or stones, no pushing, shoving, fighting, tripping, wrestling, tackling, or pulling on clothes.
4. Be careful on swings and slides. Stay seated!
5. Do not pick up stones or sticks.
6. Throwing snow is not allowed.
7. Stay outdoors for the entire recess period, except for emergencies.
8. Tell the teachers or supervisors if you see an accident or misbehavior.
9. Talk nicely to each other! Bad language, mean teasing and harassing other students are not permitted at any time during school.
10. Please do not bring expensive toys to school. No toys or trading cards are allowed on the playground.
11. Electronic games, even though allowed on school busses, are not allowed out of school bags in school.

Inside Recess Rules

1. Students must remain within their own classroom.
2. Loud talking, shouting and running are not permitted.
3. Remember to use indoor behavior: move about the classroom slowly and quietly.

Students who don't follow rules will be subject to disciplinary action.

Lost/Damaged Books and Materials

At the beginning of the school year, students will be assigned a variety of textbooks and materials in their name. The cost to replace these items could be costly, so we ask that students take good care of the materials assigned to them. It is the responsibility of the student to return or pay for their assigned items.

Family and Parent Involvement

PTO

The Symons Elementary School Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) meets regularly and invites parents to join in on the fun! Together this parent group plans and organizes a variety of events for the student body of Symons. For more information please visit the Symons web page and click the link for the parent teacher organization.

Volunteering in the Classroom

Please check with your student's classroom teacher for volunteer opportunities in the classroom.

School Events

Symons Elementary has an active Student Council and Parent Teacher Organization that help to coordinate several events for students and families throughout the year. Please look for notes coming home with your child in order to stay informed. Stay updated on school events by checking the website and class notes that go home.

Report Cards and Conferences – Symons Elementary School practices sending home report grades three times a year. You will see report cards come home in the fall, winter and spring. Parent and Teacher conferences are held twice a year. We require that all students are represented by a parent or guardian at fall conferences. Spring conferences are scheduled per the request of the parent and/or the teacher.

Enrolling Students

When enrolling a student at Symons Elementary the state of Michigan requires all students entering to present valid immunizations and a birth certificate. Students cannot be enrolled in school if immunization requirements are not met. You will be asked to fill out a Request of Records form that will be sent to the student's previous school. They will then send the records through the US mail back to Symons. You will receive a packet of information that will give you all the information that you and your student will need to get started at Symons.

Student Placement

Staff at Symons Elementary School devotes a great deal of time forming classes. Our primary goal is to place each child in the learning environment that best encourages his/her growth academically, socially and emotionally. We work carefully to develop balanced classes, considering such factors as academic strengths and challenges, personalities, girl/boy ratios, behavior and the requirements of special needs students.

Please understand that you may not request a specific teacher. We are using input from parents, teachers and support staff to make the best placement for each child and to provide equity for all families.

Childcare Services

Symons has several child care programs to offer families attending school in the Milan district. Programs are in service starting the first day of the school year and continue until the last day of school. All dates follow the district calendar. These programs are not in service when the school is closed for any reason. Call 439-5159 for more information.

Students should not arrive at school before **8:50**. Dismissal at Symons is at **3:50**. Prompt pick up is expected. **If a student arrives too early or is not picked up on time, they will be sent to the School Age Child Care and will be charged a fee of \$10.00 per session.**

Board of Education Policies on Bullying, Sexual Harassment, and Weapons

Bullying

It is the district policy to provide a safe and nurturing educational environment for all students. Symons follows district policy regarding bullying. That policy is available on Milan Area Schools' website under board policies.

Sexual Harassment

The sexual harassment of a staff member or student of the district is strictly forbidden. Any staff member, student, board member or agent of the district who is found to have sexually harassed a staff member, student, agent, administrator, board member or other individual who is lawfully on district premises will be subjected to disciplinary action, up to and including suspension or dismissal.

Weapons

The board, as both an employer and a public school district, is concerned with and interested in protecting the health, safety and welfare of students, employees and visitors. The board recognizes that school buildings, facilities, vehicles, grounds and other school property are best utilized in the education process in the absence of threats to physical well-being and safety.

Individuals possessing weapons of any kind, including knives or pocketknives, on district property or at school-sponsored events, may be suspended for three days from school. Individuals possessing a weapon with the intention of harming someone will be expelled from school.

Conclusion

We hope that the 2016 – 2017 handbook helps to inform families of basic protocol and procedures. As always, if you have any further questions please feel free to contact your child's teacher, the office or Mrs. Gillow.

Hours of Operation and Frequently Called Numbers

Symons Hours of Operation

9:05 – 3:50 Full day
9:05 – 12:15 Half day

Frequently Called Phone Numbers

Symons Elementary	439-5300
Symons Fax Number	439-5303
Symons School Nurse	439-5858
Symons Before/After School Care	439-5337
Paddock Elementary	439-5100
Milan Middle School	439-5200
Milan High School	439-5000

School Age Child Care	439-5159
Community Education	439-5278
Superintendent's Office	439-5050
Bus Garage	439-5900